

REMARKS

The rejection of claim 20 under 35 USC Sec. 112, second paragraph has been obviated by deleting the objected-to language in this claim.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 1 under 35 USC §102(b). Claim 1 recites a retractor having “a frame including only two leg plates, which are disposed so as to face one another, and are connected by a back plate so as to be integral...” By contrast, if the lower and upper casings 104 and 105 disclosed in the ‘569 patent are read as being “leg plates” as the Examiner has done in the last Office Action, then the frame 12 of the ‘569 patent would include four leg plates 18, 20, 104 and 105. Moreover, the only components designated as leg plates in the ‘569 patent are the plates 18 and 20 (see column 3, line 14). See also By contrast, component 105 is designated as a “lower casing” that surrounds the clutch 33 (see column 4, line 10). It is not “integral” with the frame 12 as specified in claim 1; rather, it is only secured to the frame (see Figure 1). For all these reasons, the Examiner appears to have completely ignored the limitation drawn to “a frame including only two leg plates,” in the last Office Action. Second, claim 1 has been further amended to recite that the webbing is disposed directly between the two leg plates “such that edges of the webbing belt directly face said web plates”, a limitation which even more clearly distinguishes the recited leg plates from casing panel 105 cited by the Examiner, as the casing 104 does not directly face the edge of the webbing 24 in the ‘569 patent. Hence claim 1 is clearly patentable over the Canada ‘569 patent.

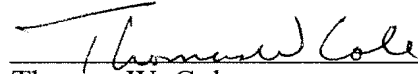
Claim 20 has been amended to include the same limitations as claim 1, and is therefore also patentable.

As the balance of the claims is dependent upon either claim 1 or 20, these claims are patentable at least by reason of such dependency.

Finally, new claims 21-24 have been added which distinguish the invention even further away from the Canada ‘569 patent.

Now that all of the claims are believed to be patentable, the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is hereby earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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